

**[Mrs. Ella Burt]**

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Beliefs and Customs — folkways

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Form [md] 3

Folklore Collection (or Type)

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Title Southern Oregon folkways

Place of origin Oregon Date 3/13/39

Project worker Mary M. Banister

Project editor

Remarks

Form A

Circumstances of Interview

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Manly M. Banister Date March 13, 1939

Address 2071 S. W. Park Avenue

Subject Southern Oregon Folkways

Name and address of informant Mrs. Ella Burt

603 S. E. 12th Avenue

Date and time of interview March 13, A.M.

Place of interview 603 S. E. 12th Ave

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Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant

Miss Nettie Spencer—2069 S. W. Park

Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None

Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

The house is situated across the street from Washington High School, two blocks north of Morrison Street. It is a plain dwelling house with a single story. The district is a respectable one, of moderate class.

Form B

Information obtained should supply the following facts:

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates
6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates
7. Special Skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities
9. Description of informant

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### 10. Other points gained in interview

"I was born in Oregon eighty years ago, near Yoncalla. My first husband was the son of Charles Applegate. My father was W. H. Wilson. He came to Oregon with Jesse Applegate."

She refused to give any further vital facts.

Form C

Text:

Well now, I don't know what I can say. Folks lived then same as they do now. I don't see any difference, anyway. Oh, we had dances and things just like today. I don't know much about the music; just fiddles—violins, and some folks had organs. They had very sociable people all around—not like they are today. Everybody lived scattered like. There wasn't any thick settlement like now. We all had to go horseback wherever we went.

The dress was about line same as it is now. Of course the women dressed different, but there hasn't been much change in men's clothes. Not that I can see, anyway. They wore an awful lot of boots. All the men wore them. And when they were worn out, they tore them to pieces and made shoes for us children. About one pair a year was all we had.

We had lots of venison and wild game. There were a lot of deer and wild animals then. My father was an awfully good shot and kept his gun handy.

We had good schoolteachers. I remember my first schoolteacher> 2 whose name was Binger Herman. He was postmaster, too, for a while, and afterward he was a Congressman many times. (Coos County Stages) brought in all our mail.

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We didn't want for anything. We had plenty to eat and plenty to wear, for what places we went, anyway. Everybody was happy and contented, well and strong. “ [Harper's Weekly?] “ was the principal paper, and during the War we got all the pictures.

We lived in log cabins, but that wasn't any hardship. They were comfortable and well-made.

We had lots of old-fashioned spelling schools. We'd go horseback—that was the only way to get around in those days.

For supplies, they drove ox-teams into Eugene or Oregon City, where we'd load up with supplies and bring them home. There were flour, bacon and things like that. Didn't need to buy fresh meat because we had plenty of beeves; and it was awfully good beef, I can remember that.

I can't remember when my mother didn't cook food just like anybody else. They did things then same as they do now.

There were a lot of Indians around, but they never bothered us. There were friendly Indians lived close, but the mean ones were farther away. We watched them pretty close, but mostly they were afraid of the white men. My father had an awful lot of trouble with them when he first came. He always kept his gun ready for them.

Cattle-raising is mostly what went on down there (Southern Oregon). Soon they went into farming and raising grain. They got sheep and sold the wool at Scottsburg which was the nearest port where the wool could be shipped.

3

There wasn't any school house, so school was kept first at one house and then at another. The scholars paid so much apiece to the owner of the household for the privilege of coming there, and they had a teacher. But he wasn't paid much—usually about eight or

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ten dollars a month. But those conditions didn't last; they got better and better all the time. There weren't any churches either, and the preacher did his preaching at somebody's home; first at one place then at another, and everybody would come horseback.

Uncle Jesse was the first person to have a little store at his home about a mile this side of Yoncalla. He sold things to people there. Uncle Charlie Applegate raised lots of sheep. He had a great mess of boys, seven or eight of them; and they worked hard at raising sheep and got wealthy at it. They would haul their wool, six or eight wagonloads at a time, in shearing season to Scottsburg for shipment. They was a very industrious lot of people, my goodness!

Wheat was flailed out with a flail (Illustrative motions), or tramped out by horses. We always came down to Portland to get flour. Whenever they traded in their wool, they always brought enough supplies at once to last a whole year. They laid in supplies of sugar, syrup, coffee, and things like that.

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Form D

Extra Comment

Comment:

Mrs. Burt is a very difficult person to interview. She is so deaf she couldn't hear the shot that was heard around the world if it were fired in the same room with her. Her mind is definitely rusty and requires constant oiling with persuasive and suggestive phrases, boomed forth with the full power of one's lungs. Then it is too, too disappointing to have her say, "henh? What say?" Very trying and discouraging. A little can be done with writing, but in general she is a very poor informant. Before I was finished with the interview, an old

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lady friend came in, and I was politely but definitely ushered out the door. Therefore the incompleteness of Form B. I do not recommend Mrs. Burt for further interviewing.